S N 563 852 [553] [788] the other. Then he turns over any seven pages of the Koran, and from the seventh word of the seventh line of the seventh page, takes the name. When a male child reaches his seventh birthday he is circumcised and taught to worship.

c. Marriage

S N 563 582 [171] The marriage customs of the Chinese Moslems, with the exception of the wedding ceremony itself, are the same as those of the Chinese. The bridegroom is accompanied by his father to the bride's home, where the ceremony is performed. The Ahung reads from the Koran, in a manner similar to that of the Christian marriage service, then asks the couple whether they agree to the union.

N *563 585 In Koko Nor (Chinghai) the bride is customarily covered with a piece of red cloth after the ceremony, then lifted by her uncle or brother into the sedan chair and sent to the groom's home. Upon arriving there she is lifted out by her relatives. She wears a veil on the first day and hides in her chamber while relatives and guests sing, dance and feast in celebration. On the second day she receives guests, bowing to each one. Meanwhile the guests present their gifts and congratulations.

S N 563 582 585 [783] Exogamic marriage is permissable to the extent that a man may marry a Han Chinese woman, who is supposed by marriage to become a Moslem. Before such a marriage the girl must submit to elaborate purification ceremonies to cleanse her from the defilement of her own home. The Ahung officiates at the wedding and the Chinese custom of worshiping heaven and earth is not performed.

d. Funeral and burial

S N 563 764 The funeral customs of the Chinese Moslems are more distinct from those of the Chinese. The dead body is washed ceremoniously by religious leaders from the mosque, who take the garments of the deceased for themselves. The body is then swathed in white bandages, each limb being bandaged separately. Correct performance of this rite is very important. Well-to-do people sprinkle incense on the cloth used for bandages. The wealthy also place large quantities of musk and camphor in the grave. The corpse is placed upon a board under which are the bands necessary for lowering it into the grave, then covered with a bottomless coffin for the trip to the cemetery. The coffin is never interred. The corpse is placed in the grave with head to the north, feet to the south and face toward Mecca.

When the deceased is a woman, only members of the family may look on when the coffin is removed, and only blood relatives, preferably sons, may descend into the grave to arrange the body.

S N 563 763 769 There are elaborate instructions concerning death. Rituals include the recitation of prayers as death approaches, the

/Chinese Moslems (Dungans)/

S N 563 763 769 making of a will, the giving of alms, rites at the grave, and the recitation of prayers and giving of alms on certain days after death, and on the first, second and third anniversaries.

The Moslems have their own burial grounds. The mounds raised over the graves are rectangular, not round as in the case of the Chinese. The top of the filled grave must be at least five inches (half a Chinese foot) above the surrounding earth, lest the location be forgotten. A stone may be erected in front of the grave, but the name of the deceased may not be engraved upon it.

S N 563 796 e. Festivals and holidays

Many of the religious festivals are more pagan than Moslem, especially those which are seasonal and therefore not connected with the Moslem calendar. Their celebrations are merely popular gatherings for feasting and enjoyment.

The Moslem New Year (Yengi Yil) celebrates the breaking of the Ramadan fast. The festival takes place during the first three days of the tenth month by the Moslem calendar. Special services are held in the mosques. The people bathe and dress in their best clothes. It is a time of greeting, well-wishing, feasting, visiting and gift-giving. For the Moslems and the Chinese alike, the New Year celebration is the greatest holiday of the year.

S N 563 795 668 199 5. Present day conditions

According to a speech delivered by Burkhan, chairman of the Preparatory Committee of the China Islamic Association, at the Conference of the Asian and Pacific Regions, on October 18, 1952, the Islam religion as well as the customs and habits of its followers are fully respected by the Communist regime. Chinese Moslems are free to practice their faith without interference. It is also said that official circulars from Peking have ordered the people to continue the observance of their important festivals. The tax on the slaughter of cattle for Moslem consumption is abolished, and official holidays are granted on Moslem holidays.

S N [423] In accordance with the Agrarian Reform Law, the mosques may retain their land holdings if the local populace so desire. It is also reported that when the land reform movement was carried out in the Northwest, the land of the mosques was in most cases left untouched. There was also a report of an organized Hajji to Mecca in 1952, which for reasons unknown failed to reach its goal. Special government regulations give Moslem workers in public organizations and educational institutions time off on the more important religious festival days. In military units, factories and schools, consideration is also given to the habits and customs of cadres, soldiers, workers and students of the Moslem faith.